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**CITIZENS CLEAN ELECTIONS COMMISSION IS CURRENTLY SEEKING
SPONSORS FOR 2006 CANDIDATE DEBATES**

PHOENIX (August 15, 2005) – The Citizens Clean Elections Commission (Commission), a state agency that administers the Citizens Clean Elections Act (Act), announced today it is currently seeking nonpartisan sponsors for the 2006 primary and general election legislative and statewide debates. In addition to providing limited, regulated funding for candidate campaigns, the Commission is responsible for organizing candidate debates during the primary and general elections which are free and open to the public. This is the fourth major election for which the Commission has hosted the candidate debates since it was created by the voter-initiative in 1998.

“These debates represent a great opportunity to foster open discussions of the issues and encourage involvement among candidates and voters,” said Autumn Southard, voter education manager for the Commission. “There are many opportunities for organizations to get involved in the Commission’s efforts to increase voter participation in Arizona’s elections.”

The Commission works with other organizations to sponsor professional, fair and nonpartisan candidate debates for each statewide race, including: Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Treasurer, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Corporation Commission, Mine Inspector, State Senate and State House of Representatives. The Commission’s primary and general election debates are open to both Clean Elections candidates (participating candidates) and those who are not participating in the Clean Elections program (nonparticipating candidates). However, participating candidates are required to participate in the debates, ensuring that constituents have an opportunity to hear the candidate's platforms on a variety of public policy issues.

Applications will be evaluated in accordance with an established evaluation plan. The award(s) will be made to those whose proposal(s) are determined to be the most advantageous to the Commission based on the following criteria: Method of approach, debate experience and expertise, perception of nonpartisanship and cost. Organizations that would like more information or are interested in participating as a debate sponsor, should visit the Commission website at www.azcleelections.gov. Sponsorship applications are due no later than 5:00pm on October 31, 2005.

About the Citizens Clean Elections Commission:

The Citizens Clean Elections Act, which was passed by voters in 1998, created a new campaign financing system that provides full public funding to qualified candidates who agree to abide by Citizens Clean Elections Commission guidelines. Candidates for statewide and legislative offices are eligible to participate in the public funding program.

To qualify for funding, participating candidates must adhere to strict spending and contribution limits and gather \$5 qualifying contributions from a number of registered voters. Participating candidates also agree to attend required debates. For more information visit the Citizens Clean Elections Commission website: www.azcleelections.gov.